

100 Day Report from the U.S. Senate Special Committee on the Year 2000 Technology Problem, and the *Report of the Select Committee on U.S. National Security and Military/Commercial Concerns with the People's Republic of China*, known as the Cox Report.

As of November 1999, the Web site provided access to more than 104,000 titles on GPO servers and over 62,000 additional titles through links to other Federal agency Web sites. Statistics indicated that at the time **GPO Access** fulfilled approximately 21 million document retrievals per month.

Ben's Guide was awarded the American Library Association's "Notable Children's Web Site" designation in April 2000, an honor reserved for sites "considered the best Web sites for ages birth-14, outstanding in both content and reception."

Since the last *Biennial Report* in 1997, GPO redesigned and reorganized **GPO Access**, developed a plan for permanent public access, added new applications and publications, improved document searches and retrievals, and facilitated its indexing by

Internet search engines and directories. The service also introduced the "Online Bookstore" for GPO's sales publications, a site-search capability, a privacy and security notice, a creative Web site for kids known as **Ben's Guide**, a help page, and exit pages. With the increasing public use of **GPO Access**, system enhancements were made to handle Web site traffic more quickly and efficiently.

The report noted that the cost of **GPO Access** has been much lower than what was originally estimated by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) in the legislation creating the system (Pub. L. 103-40). CBO estimated in 1993 that creating and operating the online system would cost approximately \$6 million in appropriated funds over the first 5 years. In addition, CBO said the provision of free online access to Federal depository libraries would cost another \$2 million to \$10 million per year in appropriated funds.

In fact, the latest *Biennial Report* found that the total cost of **GPO Access** has been \$12.9 million

since it began operations in 1994, 20 percent less than the lowest estimate and 77 percent under the higher estimate. At the same time, the report cited high levels of customer satisfaction with **GPO Access**.

Ben's Guide to Online Government Information Released

Early in 2000, GPO released a new Web site for students, parents, and teachers called **Ben's Guide to U.S. Government for Kids**, at <http://bensguide.gpo.gov>. The site provides a fun and educational introduction to how the Government works based on information resources available through **GPO Access**.

With Benjamin Franklin as a guide, the kids' pages cover topics such as the Constitution, how Federal laws are made, the branches of the Federal Government, and what it means to be a U.S. citizen. **Ben's Guide** also includes games and links to other Government Web sites created for kids.

A service of GPO's Superintendent of Documents, **Ben's Guide** offers instruction in the use of the primary source materials on **GPO Access**. It includes resources tailored to four specific age groups, plus a special set for parents and educators.

Franklin was chosen as the tour guide through this site because he once held the title of "public printer"—the Government's printer—for several of the American colonies. He also helped organize one of the first libraries in America.

Ben's Guide complements the efforts of Federal departments and agencies in the executive branch to expand access to Internet-based educational resources for children, teachers, and parents, following a Presidential directive dated April 18, 1997.

Ben's Guide was released to highly positive reviews. A prototype was critiqued at the American Association of School Librarians conference in November 1999, where it received excellent reviews. The *Newsletter of the Documents Interest Group of Oregon* (December 1999) described **Ben's Guide** as a "well-designed children's Web site" that "could be useful for reference questions as well," and characterized it as having "an attention to detail and to readability

that is exemplary in Web design." **Ben's Guide** was awarded the American Library Association's "Notable Children's Web Site" designation in April 2000, an honor reserved for sites "considered the best Web sites for ages birth-14, outstanding in both content and reception."

Public Access to Microsoft Antitrust Case Documents

At the request of the Federal District Court for the District of Columbia, GPO provided public access during the year to key documents issued in the Microsoft antitrust case by Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson. The documents included the "Findings of Fact," issued November 5, 1999; the "Conclusions of Law and Order," issued April 3, 2000; and the "Memorandum and Order and Final Judgment," issued June 7, 2000.

For each document, GPO was asked to make advance preparations for rapid dissemination. GPO established a specific URL for the Microsoft case documents to be released on **GPO Access**, at <http://usvms.gpo.gov>. At the Court's request, the documents were made available in WordPerfect and Portable Document Format (PDF) formats, and GPO added availability in HTML format. To handle the anticipated demand, GPO arranged to have the documents loaded on 10 servers configured behind a Force 5 BigIP load balancer, served by five T1 lines.

The Court also asked that GPO make available printed copies of the documents through its main bookstore on North Capitol Street in Washington, DC, on the date of release. GPO produced copies of the covers in advance, established sales prices for the products, and made preparations to dedicate high-speed duplicating systems for rapid document production. In addition, GPO set up a system for taking advance orders for the printed publications.

Following the announcements of the decisions contained in these documents, printed copies and electronic disk versions were transferred to GPO by the Court. Print production began immediately, and sufficient numbers of copies were produced by the public availability deadlines. At the same time, the electronic versions were readied for the release time. Following release, online traffic was heavy. In the

first hour following release of the "Findings of Fact," **GPO Access** experienced 152,000 successful connections, with new connections averaging between 75 and 100 every 4 seconds. In the first hour following release of the "Conclusions of Law," **GPO Access** experienced 90,000 successful connections. A total of 53,000 successful connections were experienced in the first hour following release of the "Memorandum and Order and Final Judgment" in June. Print copies were made available for sale at GPO bookstores around the Nation and through Federal depository libraries nationwide.

Many of the network evening news broadcasts about the documents were filmed in front of GPO on the release days.

Use of Online U.S. Budget Increased

As the President's Fiscal Year 2001 Budget was released to the public through GPO bookstores, thousands of citizens reviewed the individual budget documents online through **GPO Access**.

Compared to the year before, there was a dramatic increase in the public's use of the online budget. A year earlier, first-day sales of the printed budget documents—including the *Budget*, the *Budget Appendix*, *Historical Tables*, *Analytical Perspectives*, *Citizens Guide*, and *Budget System and Concepts*—were 4,631 sets, while **GPO Access** hits for the same information online were 45,652.

On February 7, 2000, the budget documents and the online version were again released the same day. This time, 4,473 sets of budget documents were sold, a decrease of about 3 percent. However, **GPO Access** hits for budget documents jumped to 115,229, an increase of more than 150 percent. GPO worked closely with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in the preparation of the six budget documents, which together comprised a

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